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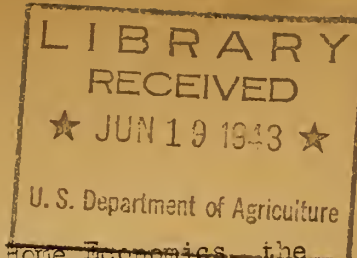
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AFTER THE FLOOD



Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, June 4, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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VAN DEMAN: I think the first thing that occurs to a woman going back to a house that has been flooded is, "What's the use? 'Doesn't seem worth bothering with." But chances are you can make things look pretty different, once you get started with that grim, set look on your face--and plenty of mops and brooms and brushes.

Right away, inspect the framework and foundations to see that the house isn't going to topple in. Watch out for loose plaster that's ready to drop from the walls or ceilings. Wet plaster is heavy, and it's a good idea to go around knocking it off with a stick before it has a chance to fall on you.

Of course, you'll want to get all the furniture outdoors as soon as possible. Remove as many drawers, slides, and other working parts as you can. These will probably be stuck tight, but try not to force anything. For example, it's better to take the back out of a bureau, and push the drawers forward than try to pull them out the usual way. Clean the mud and dirt off separate pieces. Then wash them and leave them to dry--away from the hot sun--before putting them together again.

It goes without saying that after a flood you have to be very careful about your drinking water. Until the county authorities have inspected your well or cistern, better boil all the water you use for at least 20 minutes.

It's just too bad, but it's dangerous to eat any raw fruits and vegetables unless you're sure the flood water didn't touch them. Naturally you'll have to throw out flour and cornmeal that got wet or damp, medicines in cardboard containers or corked bottles that water seeped into--in fact everything "taken internally" except what was in hermetically sealed cans.

If you have electricity at your house, better have an electrician check your system before you use it. Short circuits could easily burn down the house, or even electrocute somebody.

Just one more thing while we're hitting the high spots--Your first inclination when you see mud-stained bedding and clothing may be to make up some nice hot soapsuds and duck them in for a good scrubbing. But this will set stains. It's better to shake and brush off all the loose dirt first, then rinse the things in cold or lukewarm water several times to take out particles of soil that have lodged in the fibers. When you can't rinse out any more dirt, you can go ahead with your warm soapsuds as if you were doing a regular wash.

The hardest things, of course, to do anything about are flood-soaked mattresses and thick cotton or wool comforters. Unless your mattress is unusually good, better discard it. The only way to manage your comforters is to take them apart, wash the cover and filling separately, then refill and re-tuft them.

Finally, a good idea would be to talk to your County Extension people or Farm Security supervisors if you haven't already. They can give you help that will exactly fit your own situation and flood problems.

